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24 November 1948

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN CHINA

The present mission of the Chinese Communist armies is to destroy the effectiveness of the Nationalist military field forces and thereby eliminate organized Nationalist resistance. It is this objective, and not merely an intention to capture Nanking, that is determining the pattern of the present all-out Communist campaign, which is extending from Hopeh Province to the environs of Nanking. In achieving this objective, the Communists now appear committed to a concerted drive against Nationalist concentrations in the Hsouchou sector. Although the Communists are also massing for attacks in North China, a major move against Nationalist forces in the Tientsin-Peiping corridor will probably await the outcome of the battle for Hsouchou. If Communist operations continue at the present accelerated tempo, it is estimated that Communist forces may successfully attain their objective within the next 30 days. The collapse of organized Nationalist military resistance will probably force Chiang Kai-shek's Government to flee south or surrender to the Communists.

Estimated Strengths Although the National Government currently claims to have over two million men under arms, a more realistic estimate of the strength of the Government's tactical forces would probably be slightly less than one million troops capable of effective employment against Communist forces in North and Central China. However, the loyalty and combat efficiency of a large percentage of the tactical troops in Central China is questionable. On the other hand, the total number of Communist effectives is believed to exceed one and one-half million troops, possessing high morale and fairly good equipment.

North China In North China, the Nationalist Commander Fu Tso-yl has under his immediate command approximately 300,000 well-trained and fairly well-equipped

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veterans. In holding the vital, though extremely vulnerable Tientsin-Peiping-Kalgan corridor, General Fu faces approximately 300,000 Communist troops grouped to the west of Peiping. Furthermore, as a consequence of the fall of Manchuria, at least 400,000 additional Communist troops have become available for operations against General Fu. This constitutes a potential threat of 700,000 Communist troops presently available for a North or Central China operation. Although North China is at present relatively quiet, current reports indicate that the Communists are now concentrating north of the vital Kaitan coal-mining region, and may soon launch a drive in the Peiping-Tientsin area. If the Communists should undertake such an offensive, they would probably be successful, despite General Fu's intention to defend this area, in forcing Fu's withdrawal westward into the Province of Suiyuan. This would permit the Communists to occupy Peiping, Tientsin, and the corridor. Communist forces in North China appear at present to be awaiting the outcome of the battle for Hsuehchou in Central China before making any major move.

Central China In Central China, Communist forces are currently estimated to number 400,000 troops; they are capably led by Generals Chen Yi and Liu Po-cheng. Nationalist forces number approximately 300,000. Following their temporary withdrawal on 17 November when confronted with determined and surprising Nationalist resistance to the initial attack, the Communists have resumed their attack in the Hsuehchou area with feverish intensity. This Communist setback appears to have been caused by a miscalculation on the part of Communist General Chen Yi who anticipated that Nationalist troops would defect in large numbers at Hsuehchou, much as they have done recently in Tsinan and Manchuria. Present Communist strategy appears to be designed to prevent a consolidation of Nationalist forces in the Suhsien area between Hsuehchou and Pangfou and to isolate

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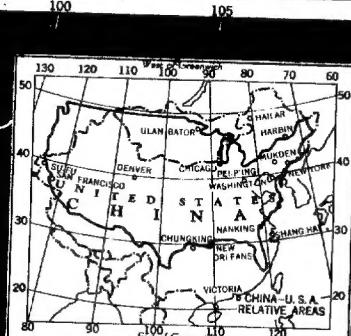
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the Nationalists in three pockets of resistance located east of Hsuchow, north of Pangfou, and near Mengcheng (north-west of Pangfou).

Conclusion US field estimates indicate that the Communist forces are capable of isolating and destroying these Nationalist pockets of resistance, a development which would effectively destroy the Nationalist military machine and open the road to Nanking. The Communists unquestionably possess the initiative and the capability to accomplish their mission. Whether it will require weeks or months depends upon how long Chiang Kai-shek can retain the loyalty and will to fight of an effective number of his troops.

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The international boundaries shown on this map do not necessarily correspond in all cases to the boundaries recognized by the U. S. Government.

